

BRISTOL 1920-1926



JOHN LYES

THE BRISTOL BRANCH OF THE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION LOCAL HISTORY PAMPHLETS

Hon. General Editor: PETER HARRIS

Assistant General Editor: NORMA KNIGHT

Editorial Advisor: JOSEPH BETTEY

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John Lyes is the author of '*A Strong Smell of Brimstone*': *The Attorneys and Solicitors of Bristol 1740-1840, Bristol 1901-1913 and Bristol 1914-1919* (nos. 98, 104 and 107 in this series).

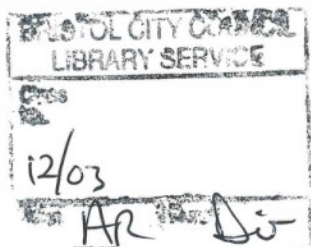
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BRISTOL 1920-1926

The early 1920s were still overshadowed by the war that had so recently come to an end. Many returning ex-servicemen were unemployed and some were still suffering from the mental scars resulting from their experiences in battle. Those in work were struggling for improvements in their conditions and the period saw a number of strikes, including the general strike, which appear to have been conducted with little or no violence.

Changes in the face of Bristol and surrounding districts were brought about by the construction of new roads commissioned to provide work for the unemployed. New buildings were beginning to appear, notably the University's Wills Memorial Building, opened by King George V who, when writing to the Corporation after his visit, observed 'The private generosity which has made this erection possible is a convincing proof that the race of pious founders and benefactors did not become extinct with the passing of the Middle Ages.'

Wireless was making an impact and the City Fathers began to consider the necessity of providing parking facilities for motor cars. Temperance and Sunday observance were still matters that concerned many citizens. Lady councillors, magistrates and jurors entered the scene. Legislation, including the Education Act and the Housing and Town Planning Act cast new duties on the local authority.

Many of the incidents are illustrated in Reece Winstone's *Bristol in the 1920s* and the Chronicle of Events on pages 58 and 59 of that volume contains a number of items not dealt with here. This serves to illustrate the fact that this selection is arbitrary and may very well disappoint some readers by omitting events that they consider important.

1920

At the beginning of January the third windjammer to visit Bristol during the preceding three months arrived at the city docks. The *Monkbarns*, a three-masted full rigger, took forty-eight days to travel from Buenos Aires with a cargo of linseed.

Bristol railwaymen met on 4 January to consider the Government's wage offer which included a standardisation of the wage system. Despite

the fact that their union had recommended acceptance, the meeting instructed their delegate to vote against the offer. A week later the NUR conference, by a small majority, decided to accept it.

On 15 January, addressing a meeting of the Bristol Naturalists' Society, their President, Dr E.H. Cook, expressed the view that the time would come when the country's coal stocks would be exhausted and that consideration should be given to methods of harnessing tidal power.

At their January meeting the Council approved new conditions for their manual workers. They agreed a 47-hour working week with 12 days' annual paid holiday.

In January Mr T.V.T. Baxter was appointed the first headmaster of the new secondary school at Cotham. The school was formally opened by the Lord Mayor in September but for some time ex-army huts had to be used as classrooms.

In the middle of the month the National Canine Defence League presented medals to Edward Reginald Low and Edward Wood, two young employees of the Suspension Bridge Company; they had climbed down the cliff face to rescue a cross-bred sheep dog.

The Deputy City Librarian, Albert Edward Tilling, died on 18 January. Under the pseudonym of Stanley Hutton he had written *Bristol and Its Famous Associations* and a concise *History of Bath and Bristol* and contributed a number of articles on local history to the press.

'Pussyfoot' Johnson, an American campaigner for prohibition, was visiting the country, having raised funds to mount a campaign to make England dry. Meetings to oppose his campaign were organised and one held at Kingswood on 22 January protested at 'the insolent interference of professional American agitators in the domestic affairs of this country'. A meeting in support of his campaign was held a week later at the YMCA Hall in St James's Square; it was to have been addressed by Mr Johnson himself but he was indisposed. Admission was by ticket only and there were a large number of demonstrators outside the meeting hall.

At the end of January a meeting was held at the Council House to discuss the question of unemployment; it was attended by local Members of Parliament, representatives of the City Council's Unemployment Committee and employers. It was estimated that there were 7,000 men seeking employment in the city and that 6,000 of these were ex-servicemen. The meeting sent out a strong appeal to employers to assist in finding employment.

At the annual Licensing Sessions held at the beginning of February the Chief Constable reported an increase in the number of convictions for drunkenness in the city. In 1919 147 males and 38 females had been convicted whereas in the previous year the numbers had been 45 and 5

respectively. The Brewster Sessions at Lawford's Gate heard that there had been no such convictions there in 1919.

On 3 February Albert Coates conducted the Sir Thomas Beecham Symphony Orchestra at a concert in the Colston Hall. Madame Edna Thurston and Mr Peter Dawson were the soloists.

During the third National Rat Week from 23 to 28 February there were 2469 applications from householders for a supply of Barium poison; this was sufficient for 263,000 baits. Corporation employees working for the Sanitary Committee laid down 5,300 baits of which 3,830 were taken. The cost of the exercise was £200.

On the last day of February a mass meeting of tobacco workers was held at the People's Palace in Baldwin Street to back a claim for a wage increase and the introduction of a 44-hour week. The meeting criticised the 'gift' of a bonus which depended on good conduct and expressed the view that it should be included in the wage.

The Bristol Savages opened their new wigwam at the Red Lodge on 6 March. Following the closure of Mary Carpenter's reformatory, the Red Lodge had been purchased by a number of concerned citizens who paid for the cost of refurbishing it. In September the Council accepted the property as a gift subject to the Savages' lease.

On 10 March a meeting was held at the Council House for the purpose of considering the provision of a permanent ground for Bristol Rugby Club as a memorial to the 300 young rugby footballers from the district who died during the war. The Memorial Ground in Filton Avenue was opened on 24 September 1921 when Bristol Rugby Football Club played Cardiff, beating them by 19 points to 3.

In the middle of March a winding-up order was made in respect of the Third Bristol Perfect Thrift Building Society. The default was due to the late secretary who had died some four years previously. On his death the society's affairs were in a parlous state; his successor had tried to pull things together but had not been successful.

On 12 March a number of disabled soldiers met at the YMCA Hall to protest at the way in which applications for grants were administered by the Military Service (Civil Liabilities) Committee. The meeting was presided over by Alderman Frank Sheppard.

Alderman A.J. Smith died on 19 March. He was a ship owner and coal merchant. He represented Bedminster on Somerset County Council and became a Bristol councillor in 1898. He served as Lord Mayor in 1905.

In March it was announced that Dr T.J. McNamara had been appointed Minister of Labour; he was a former headmaster of Avondale School. He left Bristol in 1892 to become the editor of the *Schoolmaster*, the organ of the National Union of Teachers, and became a Member of Parliament for North Camberwell in 1900. Mrs McNamara was a Bristolian.

On 22 March a meeting of medical officers at Venereal Disease Clinics recommended that the Bristol Voluntary Lock Hospital at 87, Ashley Road should continue its work. They recognised that sufferers could be treated at other hospitals but felt that there was a need for an institution where patients could be cared for before treatment and trained for an honest life whilst regaining their strength.

A special 'War Honours List' was published at the end of March. Many local people were honoured and the list contained a knighthood for Alderman John Swaish who inaugurated Bristol Citizens' Recruiting Committee. Clara Butt was appointed a Dame Commander of the British Empire.

The Education Act which came into force on 1 April enabled local authorities to regulate the employment of children. Local newsagents organised a public meeting at the Colston Hall to urge the Education Committee to permit boys to deliver morning papers. A deputation of newsagents later went before the committee to argue their case. The committee, who had received petitions against the proposal from the Workers' Education Association and a number of Co-operative Guilds, decided not to grant the permission.

The construction of council houses at St John's Lane, Bedminster, started in April employing direct labour. The semi-detached houses contained a large garden, three bedrooms, a parlour and a living room, bathroom, scullery and coalhouse. The Corporation had expected that the work would be funded by a loan from central government and protested when the Treasury put upon local authorities the responsibility for raising the finance. It was therefore necessary to launch a campaign to sell bonds that carried interest at the rate of 6% and were repayable in five years. In the following month the Sanitary Committee heard a report that the sale of the bonds was 'very flat indeed.' In July a meeting of clergy and ministers at the Council House was asked to promote the sale of bonds from their pulpits. At that time bonds to the value of £150,000 had been sold whereas the amount required was £800,000. By the end of August sales had reached £250,000.

Earl Haig visited Bristol in the middle of April. On arrival at Temple Meads he received a petition from unemployed ex-soldiers and then went to the Council House to receive the freedom of the city. Later in the day the University awarded him an honorary Doctor of Laws degree.

On 17 April the country's first memorial to Boy Scouts who died in the war was unveiled at the Downend. Amongst those commemorated was Revd P.G. Alexander, the local troop's first scoutmaster who perished along with Lord Kitchener when the *Hampshire* sank.

At the end of April the Lord Mayor issued an appeal for a collection to be taken at all churches and chapels to help to alleviate the distress of

unemployed ex-servicemen. At the time there were said by the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers to be 6,000 men in this category and a number were facing starvation. In May, in answer to a parliamentary question, the Minister of Labour reported that the number of registered unemployed men in Bristol was 5469, of which 4358 were ex-servicemen. At the same time it was reported to Kingswood Urban District Council that the number in that area was between 600 and 700. In Bristol there were protests at the continued employment of women, particularly as tram conductors. A demonstration resulted in some of the men surrounding tramcars and stoning them; they also attacked the women conductors' rest house, breaking all the windows. At the end of the month the Tramway Company decided to dismiss all the women, giving them a week's notice and a gratuity of £5.

On 21 May Mabel Caroline Tothill became the first lady councillor in the city. Representing the Labour Party she was returned unopposed for the Easton Ward following Councillor Sennington's elevation to the aldermanic bench. She was joined in September by Lilian Maud Pheysey, also a Labour member; she too was returned unopposed for St Philip & St Jacob North following the death of Councillor G.W. Brown.

In May the Governors of Bristol Royal Infirmary resolved to support a scheme to amalgamate their hospital with Bristol General Hospital but in the following month the committee of the latter hospital resolved to 'stand out' of the scheme and it was dropped.

At the beginning of June the Education Committee recommended the appointment of Dr Willie Ludlow Freeman as the city's first Director of Education at an annual salary of £1,250; previous to his appointment he had held a similar position at Stoke on Trent and at one time had been a pupil teacher in the city. The creation of the post was necessitated by the increased duties thrown upon the Council by the new Education Act.

W. Savile George, the Magistrates' Clerk, died on 6 June. On 24 September the new Magistrates' Clerk, Mr W.H. Wise, who was previously employed in the Town Clerk's department, was welcomed on his first day in court. Following Mr Wise's departure the Council reorganised the Town Clerk's department and appointed Josiah Green Deputy Town Clerk at a salary of £800.

In June the Council received a report concerning the proposed new civic buildings in College Green. Most of the properties required for the site had been acquired and it was proposed to manage them until it was possible to go ahead with the scheme.

In June Ah Nung appeared as a witness in Bristol Magistrates' Court and elected to take an oath in the Chinese manner. This required him to break a saucer, kneel and acknowledge that his soul would be cracked in the same manner as the saucer if he did not speak the truth.

In July there was a strike of some 350 employees of the Gas Company who objected to the terms of a national wage settlement. Whilst it lasted a number of factory employees (including hundreds of workers in Kingswood and St George boot and shoe factories) were unable to work.

The Westbury-on-Trym war memorial (in the shape of an obelisk) was unveiled by the Lord Mayor and dedicated by the Bishop on 12 July. It had been designed by Richard and James Steadman, architects, of Bristol. The Vicar, Revd H.J. Wilkins, was not present at the ceremony; he had previously objected to its form, which he considered to be pagan.¹

At the end of July ladies served for the first time as members of the jury at Quarter Sessions.

The Rector of Stapleton had indicated that he intended to resign the living on the ground of ill health. The parishioners wanted the Revd Tudor Jenkins, who had looked after the parish during his illness, to be appointed in his place. However the patron, the Hon. Mrs Smyth, indicated that she had offered the living to the Revd Louis H. Dahl. A meeting of parishioners objected and presented a petition containing the signatures of two churchwardens, eleven sidesmen, members of the church council and 400 inhabitants. They threatened to lock the church if Mrs Smyth persisted. Nevertheless in October Mr Dahl was instituted in the presence of a large congregation.

In August a Cirencester schoolboy aged 17 called W.R. Hammond played his first game for Gloucestershire. He made 60 runs in the second innings.

Also in August the Employment Bureau reported that there were 4,000 men and 200 women registered as seeking employment. The Kingswood boot and shoe trade was experiencing a slack period and one firm accepted an order for 30,000 pairs at a price showing little profit in order to keep the employees in work.

On 11 August a 'record attempt meeting' took place at Brooklands. Harry Thorpe on a Douglas motor cycle won the Junior handicap over 8 miles at an average speed of 63.25 mph. Douglas machines were also 2nd, 3rd and 5th.

Lucy Moore of 19, Constitution Hill died at Bristol Royal Infirmary on 27 September. She was known as 'Lovely Lucy' on her tours as a fat lady and weighed 47 stone 10 lbs. Large crowds assembled to watch her funeral procession.

In October Miss Sheckleton, the headmistress of Redland High School, resigned on the ground of ill health. She was succeeded by Ella Mary Edghill (formerly of King's High School, Warwick) who took up her post in the Summer Term of the following year.

¹ See *Bristol 1914-1919* (number 107 in this series) page 35.

A memorial tablet in Bristol Cathedral commemorating the life of Mary Clifford was unveiled and dedicated on 14 October. Miss Clifford, who died in January 1919, became a member of the Board of Guardians in 1882 and devoted the remainder of her life to assisting the poor and disadvantaged. She gave evidence to the Royal Commission on Aged Poor in 1893.

In the second week of October a portrait of Richardson Cross was presented to Bristol University. Mr Cross was one of the best known British ophthalmic surgeons and played an important part in the foundation of the University.

National negotiations between the Miners' Federation, the government and the employers had broken down and a strike began on 16 October. Locally, shipping was held up because bunkering was at a standstill, factories were on short time and passenger trains were curtailed. The men returned to work at the beginning of November.

On 30 October Alfred Cortot, the notable French pianist, paid his first visit to Bristol where he gave a concert at the Colston Hall. He played a programme of music by Saint-Saens, Ravel, Debussy, Vivaldi and Chopin on a Pleyel grand piano. The audience was not as large as he deserved.

Municipal elections were held on 1 November and eight Liberal, five Labour and three Conservative candidates were returned; seven Conservatives were unopposed. Labour gained three seats (two from the Liberals and one from the Conservatives).

One of the first actions of the new Council was to approve the widening of Henleaze Road and the extension of Ashton Avenue to provide work for the unemployed.

On 11 November the city fell silent at 11 am. Police stopped traffic at the Tramways Centre, Temple Meads Station was at a standstill and the Magistrates' Court observed a two minutes' silence. There was a service at the Cathedral and the Bishop addressed a meeting in the Commercial Rooms.

1,000 motor and horse drivers were on strike for the last week of November and first two weeks of December following a break-down in pay negotiations. The strikers agreed to special arrangements to ensure that the carrying of foodstuffs was not affected.

On 25 November the Ministry of Transport published a scheme for a Severn Barrage. The plan envisaged the construction of a concrete dam with turbines to generate electricity, automatic flaps and sluices to impound rising tide water, a lock and wharves for shipping and riverside areas which would lend themselves to industrial development.

On 18 December the *Malmo* was launched at Albion Dockyard by Lady Gifford. The 4,300 ton vessel was 310 feet in length and was built

for a Danish shipping company. Initially the ship refused to budge because the grease was frozen but after some feverish activity she slid gracefully into the water.

1921

At the January Quarter Sessions the Recorder, Dr William Blake Odgers KC, said that he was sorry to learn from the police of a great increase in crime. He commented that the amount of housebreaking caused quite justifiable alarm among householders. The chairman of the Juvenile Court (Mr Fred Burris) noted that there had been a slight increase in the number of offenders. He said that there were difficulties in cases where boys of different ages were charged with the same offence because birching was only available for those under the age of fourteen. The remedy, he suggested, was to raise the age.

The first lady magistrate, Mrs May Perrett, sat at Lawford's Gate court in January. Mrs Perrett was the wife of Dr C.J.P. Perrett of Downend and the niece of the late Dr W.G. Grace.

In the middle of the month Messrs John Lysaght announced that they had to close the export department at their works in Silverthorne Lane at the end of the month. There was a lack of orders for their galvanised sheets from all parts of the world caused by their costs of production and the effect of the exchange rates. The closure would be only temporary but nearly 1,000 men were affected.

Local transport workers held a meeting at the Palace Theatre on 23 January at which the seventeen unions comprising the Federation agreed to amalgamate and form one union.

Sixteen youths appeared before Lawford's Gate court charged with playing 'banker' at the Tump, North Common, on 23 January. Superintendent A. Cooke told the court that playing cards was a common occurrence in Warmley on Sundays and that the players stayed there from morning till night. Two of the defendants who had appeared previously for the same offence were fined 10/- and the remainder 7/6d.

At the end of January the Victoria Gibbs Memorial Home for Babies at Somerset Street, Kingsdown, was opened by Lady Helena Gibbs, Victoria Gibbs' sister-in-law. The premises were dedicated by the Bishop of Bristol.

Also at the end of the month a memorial window to the men of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve who had died during captivity in Germany and other countries was dedicated at the Cathedral by the Bishop of Bristol.

At this time the west end of Castle Street was being developed and a number of houses, some erected in the seventeenth century, were being demolished.

At their February meeting the Council approved a proposal from the Docks Committee that some land at Portishead Docks should be leased to Messrs Thomas W. Ward of Sheffield for shipbreaking naval destroyers.

A slump in shipping meant that a number of dockers were without employment. They waited each day outside the dock gates hoping to be called for work and on one occasion in February about 1,000 men were unsuccessful.

On 23 February there was a ceremony at which Mr H.H. Wills handed over to Clifton College the deeds of Worcester Lodge to be used as a convalescent home for the pupils. The house had previously been the homes of Alderman C.J. Pritchard, Albert Fry and Sir John Weston Stevens.

At their February meeting the Health Committee heard from the Medical Officer of Health (Dr D.S. Davies) that there had been a case of smallpox contracted by a docker. His wife and one child were also infected and the child had died. Another child had been vaccinated in order to qualify for admission to a 'baby show' and had been unaffected. It was the first case of the disease in the city since 1915.

At the end of February there was a meeting at the Colston Hall organised by the east Bristol clergy to discuss the question of unemployment. The meeting was addressed by Lord Askwith who told them that there were 11,381 men in the city out of work and of this number 5,983 were ex-servicemen and 259 disabled ex-servicemen.

In March there was an application to the justices for a licence to erect a cinema at the corner of Whiteladies Road and Melrose Place to be known as the Whiteladies Cinema. The applicant, James Pedden Emmett, said that he would put up a fine building at a cost of £50,000 and that the construction would provide work for ex-servicemen. The plans showed that the cinema would have a capacity of 970 with a separate dance hall above; the architects were La Trobe and Weston. Despite objections from the proprietors of the Triangle, Spa and Coliseum the magistrates granted the application.

At the end of the month a parliamentary question to the Air Minister referred to a letter from Bristol Aeroplane Company to women previously in the company's employ who had regular work elsewhere asking them to return to work with the company. The questioner added that men previously employed by the company were unemployed and asked the minister, who had recently placed an order with the company, if he was aware of the situation. The minister replied that the ministry was not responsible for the company's private affairs.

The churchwardens of St Mary Redcliffe, E. Brookhouse Richards and Gerald Beloe, announced that after Low Sunday, 3 April, all seats

in the church would be free and unallocated. They said that in their view the system of allocation of seats was contrary to the spirit of their religion.

The City Treasurer, John Tremayne Lane, died on 14 April. At the end of September the Council approved the appointment of William Henry Smith, the City Treasurer of Hull, as his successor at an annual salary of £1,200.

Local miners stopped work on 2 April and declared a strike on 15 April. There had been a break-down of national wage negotiations. By the end of the month married miners had to attend at the St Michael's Two Mile Hill church hall to receive bread and grocery tickets; they had one ticket valued at 2/- for each child. No house coal was arriving in the city and some industries were experiencing difficulties. In the middle of May Charles Hill's Albion Dockyard, which had been experiencing an upsurge in orders since the end of the war, had to close because of lack of coal. The strike ended at the beginning of July despite the fact that the Bristol miners voted overwhelmingly to reject the nationally negotiated settlement.

There was a bye-election in the Bristol West constituency in April occasioned by the appointment of Colonel Gibbs as Treasurer to the Household. The only nomination was that of the sitting member and he was declared to be re-elected.

At the April Council meeting the matter of the completion of Bristol North Baths was discussed. The building had been started just prior to the war and its wartime use was as a training centre for munitions workers. The meeting heard that £13,686 had already been spent and that the amount required to complete the work would be £51,500. The original estimate was for £28,888.

At the end of the month Mason Sacof of 59 York Road gave evidence to the War Crimes Inquiry in the course of its investigation into conditions at Flavelle de Martell camp. He was an interpreter at the camp and witnessed the poor quality of the food and accommodation there.

W. Friese Green collapsed and died just before addressing a cinema trade meeting in London at the beginning of May.

Bristol General Hospital and Bristol Royal Infirmary were experiencing financial pressures and at meetings in May they decided that they would have to ask all patients (except those experiencing poverty) to pay one guinea per week towards their maintenance.

In May the Council approved the Health Committee's proposal to purchase Frenchay Park for use as a centre for the treatment of tuberculosis. The purchase price was £15,000 with an additional sum of £2,350 for timber, fixtures and fittings and the electric light installation.

The May meeting of Kingswood Urban District Council considered the case of four of their workmen who were found smoking in a shed at 4.30 pm. The men, who had already been suspended from work, said that they were depositing tools and collecting their clothes prior to walking to the office for their pay. The Council decided to continue the suspension until their next meeting.

The Prince of Wales visited the city on 10 June. From Temple Meads he journeyed to Queen Square to meet ex-servicemen, to the Colston Hall to receive the freedom of the city and thence to the Merchant Venturers' Hall. After lunch he was taken to the County Ground at Ashley Down where Gloucestershire were playing the Australians and from there to Cotham where he laid the foundation stone at the new Homoeopathic Hospital. The hospital was the gift of Mr and Mrs Melville Wills in memory of their son Captain Bruce Melville Wills who was killed in the war. The Prince was then taken to the University where he received an honorary degree and by way of Clifton College to the Zoo where 200 boys from the Nautical School awaited him. Finally he returned to Temple Meads via the Mansion House. Before his visit the Prince had told the Council, 'I am coming to see the people and I want to go where the people are, where they reside.'

By the month of June work was progressing on the new road linking Horfield Common to Coldharbour Road. Originally called Kellaway Road, it later became known as Kellaway Avenue. The road was named after F.G. Kellaway, the Postmaster General; he was a Bishopston man and spent his earlier years in the city. The road was officially opened by Mr Kellaway in November.

In August a select committee of the House of Lords considered a proposal to move the compulsory pilotage line in the Bristol Channel from the Holmes to a new line from Goldcliff Point to Clevedon. The move was supported by the Chamber of Shipping, the Corporation and representatives of some shipping companies and opposed by the local pilots. The committee approved the proposal.

The census returns revealed that the population of the city was 377,061, an increase of 5.6% over the return for 1911.

A meeting of the Bristol Guardians on 2 September discussed the payment of relief to the unemployed. They agreed to continue giving assistance under exceptional circumstances without enquiry for a period of no longer than two weeks, to appoint an adequate staff of temporary enquiry officers to assist the relieving officers, to select suitable tradesmen in each district so that they could give one half of each person's relief in kind and to cease all payments being made at the home of the recipient. They also resolved to urge the Lord Mayor and Corporation to provide more work for the unemployed.

On 6 September several hundred unemployed men marched from the Ropewalk to the Colston Hall bearing banners which read: 'Work Not Charity', 'Starving Unemployed', 'Lest We Forget the Starved Seamen' and 'Feed the Children'. They had hoped to hold a meeting in the hall but were not allowed in and so they marched back to the Ropewalk where they held an outdoor meeting. They asked the Guardians to meet their committee comprising eleven members but the Guardians would not see more than four of them. The men met again on the following day and repeated their request which was again refused. The men raised a red flag and marched to St Peter's Hospital where the Guardians were meeting and attempted to rush the building but were repelled by a police baton charge. Five of the men were arrested and charged with holding an unlawful assembly and riotous conduct leading to a breach of the peace. After a lengthy hearing in the Magistrates' Court they were bound over to be of good conduct for twelve months.

The Guardians met again some two weeks later to discuss the estimates for the following year. They expected that exceptional weekly expenditure as relief for the unemployed would amount to £4,000 to £5,000. The extra relief occasioned by the miners' strike was between £2,000 and £3,000. The Guardians decided to increase the rate from 1s: 3½d to 1s: 9½d in the pound. By October the number of unemployed receiving assistance appeared to be declining. During the week ending 7 September the number of persons assisted was 12,548 in 4,647 separate cases, whereas in the week ending 12 October the number was 11,880 in 4,119 cases at a cost of £4,348. There was a further reduction in numbers at the end of December when, during the week ending 28 December 9,823 persons were assisted in 2,762 cases at a cost of £2,430 which included £510 for extra Christmas grants.

On 26 September there was a serious accident on the GWR line near the gas works at Eastville. A gang of eight plate layers were working on the permanent way when a train from Avonmouth drove into them, killing five of them instantly and seriously injuring another two, one of whom later died. The men who died were Stephen Albert Francis, Hubert George North, Joseph Bennett, Arthur Charles Hobbs, Charles Oakhill and Charles Edmunds. Edmunds was the foreman in charge and the inquest into the deaths was told that it was his responsibility to request a look-out if he thought one was necessary and that he had not done so. It was also stated that the accident happened on a misty morning and that the men's attention was diverted by the sound of a train approaching on another line. The amount of compensation was limited by the Workmen's Compensation Act to the sum of £300 in each case and the National Union of Railwaymen launched a public appeal for the families of those who died.

The Corporation had recently purchased Frenchay Park to use as a sanatorium for TB sufferers. It was opened by Sir William Treloar, the ex-Lord Mayor of London, on 5 October.

On 20 October three new freemen were admitted by the Corporation. They were George Alfred Wills and Herbert Henry Wills, generous donors to many local causes including the University and the Infirmary, and Henry Lorymer Riseley, an active promoter of Bristol's overseas trade.

On the following day, at Arnos Vale Cemetery, the Duchess of Beaufort unveiled a memorial to servicemen who died in local hospitals during the war; it was dedicated by the Bishop of Bristol. Known as the Soldiers' Corner it took the form of a loggia and recorded nearly 400 names of men from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

During the first week in November fire destroyed the boot factory belonging to Allen & Prior near the tram terminus at Kingswood. Several hundreds of pairs of boots ready for despatch were destroyed together with five tons of leather. The premises were insured but not fully and a number of indoor and outdoor workers were out of employment.

In November it was announced that Thomas Loveday from the University College of Southampton would succeed Isambard Owen as Vice-Chancellor of Bristol University.

The Eastville Management Committee of the Bristol Guardians recommended that butter should be served at breakfast for sick men and women over the age of 60 instead of margarine. Their report was discussed by the main body at the end of December, one member commenting that there were many taxpayers who were unable to afford butter. They agreed to defer the matter for three months when they anticipated that the price of butter would be lower.

1922

In January the Bristol Guardians declined an offer from the Trades Council to be responsible for the construction of a new road from Horfield Common to their Infirmary at Southmead. They explained that they had already arranged for the work to be done by men in receipt of relief, working in three-weekly shifts, so as to enable as many men as possible to participate.

Samuel J. Loxton RWA died in February. He worked as a draughtsman for the Ordnance Survey Department and for many years had contributed drawings of local scenes and buildings to the *Bristol Observer* and other local newspapers.

In the same month the proprietor of the Empire Music Hall applied to the Licensing Justices for a stage licence. The application was granted

on condition that the music hall licence was surrendered and the magistrates also imposed conditions that there would be no smoking and no supply of intoxicating liquor.

At the beginning of March the Registration Officer, when reviewing the voters' lists, excluded a man on the ground that he had been a conscientious objector. The voter agreed that he had been an objector but claimed that he had done work of national importance; the application was stood over to enable him to produce evidence.

The wedding of Princess Mary and Viscount Lascelles took place on 4 March. The city's gift to the couple was the endowment of beds in three local hospitals, the Infirmary, the General Hospital and the Children's Hospital in the name of the Princess. The cost of the endowment was £1,500 but only £1,000 had been collected by the middle of the month.

On 1 April the Revd Canon Edward Arthur Burroughs was instituted as Dean of Bristol.

At their April meeting the City Council considered an Economy Report prepared following resolutions of Councillor Ayles and the Middle Classes Union. The authors of the report had considered, amongst other matters, the expenditure on the Mansion House, the Judges' Lodging, the Lord Mayor's Chapel and the Tolzey Court. They were not able to suggest any economies in these items of expenditure except to suggest that the Tolzey Court fees could be increased.

In May the statue of Edmund Burke (by Havard Thomas) that had been unveiled in 1894 was taken down and sent to Sunningend Works in Cheltenham to be copied. The copy was to be sent to Washington DC and erected on a granite pedestal on a site to be given by the American government in pursuance of a project of the Anglo-American Society of Washington.

Frederick J. Pitfield, the headmaster of Downend school appeared before the Lawford's Gate magistrates on 18 May charged with assaulting David Crossman aged seven, a resident of the Downend Homes. The boy had apparently been disobedient and recalcitrant and refused to go the headmaster when told to do so by his teacher. Mr Pitfield dragged the boy into a lobby and caned him on the hand and leg and clouted him. The matron and doctor of the Home had felt that the punishment was excessive. The bench dismissed the charge commenting that the boy had brought the extra punishment on himself by his disobedience.

Henry Herbert Wills died on 11 May. He became a partner in the firm of W.D. & H.O. Wills in 1884 and played a leading part in the battle with British American Tobacco Company. He showed an early

interest in bicycles and motor cars and claimed to have been the first person to ride a bicycle in Norway. He retired from active business life in 1904 and was very much involved in charitable works. He gave £200,000 towards Bristol University's physics laboratory and £100,000 for the Infirmary. His largest gift was the sum of £1,500,000 for St Monica's Home of rest, the foundation stone of which was laid just a week before his death; the building was not used until 1925.

John Gregory, Bristol's 'shoemaker poet' died in May in his 91st year. A native of Devonshire, he had lived in the city for many years and was boot repairer to Clifton College.

On 6 June a new pavilion, erected as a memorial to W.G. Grace, was opened at Downend Cricket Club. The building cost £1,200 and was erected by R.W. Preddy to a design of W.S. Skinner & Sons; the ceremony was performed by Mrs Dann, the widow of Revd J.W. Dann and the surviving sister of the great cricketer. The occasion was celebrated by a match between Downend and their old rivals Frenchay; the home team won.

At the end of the month Judge Stanger retired as County Court Judge and was replaced by Judge Albert Parsons.

At their July meeting the City Council approved the arrangement by which the Baths Committee agreed to sell to Colston's Girls' School that part of Rennison's Bath which was at that time let to the school and to sell the remainder of the site by public auction. Rennison was a local thread maker who was also involved in other enterprises and the baths were opened in about 1764.

In July it was reported to the Bristol Guardians that the number of persons receiving relief was 2359 (indoor) and 12252 (outdoor); the figure included 9069 unemployed persons (men, women and children).

On 28 July a large 'No More War' demonstration was held; it was organised by citizens of all classes, political views and religious beliefs. A procession headed by the Lord Mayor's coach and including a number of tableaux and five bands marched from the Ropewalk to Durdham Down where a series of meetings was held. Resolutions were passed to work for conditions to guarantee that there would be no more war by perfecting international organisations and developing an international sense of solidarity.

Bristol North Baths were opened at the beginning of August.

In August the Traffic Sub-Committee of the Watch Committee considered a request from the Automobile Association to provide parking facilities for motor cars in the city. They decided that there was no urgent necessity for the local authority to provide a 'motor park'.

From 24 August until 6 September a 'Bristol First Exhibition' organised by Bristol Rotary Club took place at the Colston Hall. The hall was packed with stands showing articles manufactured in the city so that citizens could see what goods were produced locally and, if possible, support local industries by buying them.

On 2 September the Bishop of Clifton blessed the foundation stone at St Patrick's Church, Pile Marsh, St George. The church was designed by Sir Frank Wills and was being built by Messrs Sims & Sons of Warminster.

Under a scheme originated by the British League of Help, Bristol had assumed the position of 'Godparent' to the northern French town of Béthune which had suffered severe damage during the war. In 1920 the University had agreed to award a scholarship to a young man from the town and in August a deputation including the Lord Mayor and Sheriff paid a visit. On their return it was decided to set up a Bristol Béthune Committee with the object of raising funds to erect some housing accommodation in the town.

On 21 September Tennis Court Road, Kingswood was officially opened. The road had been built by Gloucestershire County Council under a scheme to provide work for the unemployed.

Miss Beatrice Margaret Sparks resigned as Headmistress of Colston's Girls' School in October in order to become the Principal of Cheltenham Ladies' College. Her replacement was Miss Helen Drew, Headmistress of Newark High School who took up her post in the following January.

On 22 October Captain Gypsy Smith, the evangelist, presided over mass meetings organised by the Bristol United Campaign at the Hippodrome. Half an hour before the afternoon service was due to start the queue stretched as far as the Colston Hall and as soon as that session finished a queue for the evening meeting started to form. During the course of three meetings he addressed some 11,000 people.

The Chief Guide, Lady Baden Powell, visited Bristol at the beginning of November. At the time of her visit there were some 1,000 Guides in the city and she addressed a large gathering of them in the large hall of Bristol Grammar School.

Municipal elections were held at the beginning of November. Six Conservatives and four Liberals were returned unopposed and there were contests in thirteen wards where six Labour, four Conservative and three Liberals were successful. Labour lost four seats (two each to the Conservatives and Liberals) and gained one from the Liberals. One surprise defeat was Councillor W.H. Ayles who lost to the Conservative candidate at Easton; he had been a councillor since 1912.

There was a Parliamentary election on 15 November and the results were:

Bristol Central

T.W.H. Inskip (Con)	15568
Brig Gen Thomson (Lab)	<u>12303</u>
	<u>3265</u> no change

Bristol North

H. Guest (NL)	17495
W.H. Ayles (Lab)	<u>9567</u>
	<u>7928</u> no change

Bristol West

Col. G.A. Gibbs (Con)	18124
F.W. Rafferty (L)	<u>11100</u>
	<u>7024</u> no change

Bristol East

H. Morris (NL)	13910
L. Bateman (Lab)	<u>13759</u>
	<u>151</u> no change (after a recount)

Bristol South

Sir. B. Rees (NL)	16199
D.J. Vaughan (Lab)	<u>12650</u>
	<u>3549</u> no change

Amongst the successful candidates was A.V. Alexander whose parents lived at 30 Triangle West; he was elected for Sheffield Hillsborough constituency. He was educated at Barton Hill School and became a clerk with Bristol Education Committee later moving to Weston-super-Mare to work for Somerset County Council.

Concerns were being expressed at the 'bus war' in the city and its effect on householders. In December the Watch Committee considered a report it had commissioned on the frequency of buses on some selected roads. They learned that the number of buses in each hour (inward and outward) were:

Jamaica Street	62
Kennington Avenue, Bishopston	12
Victoria Street	26
Park Street	44

The Committee concluded that more buses were running than was necessary for citizens' requirements and resolved to restrict the number of licences to be issued to the operating companies. The companies appealed to the Ministry of Transport. The Watch Committee reduced the number of the Tramway Company's licences from 148 to 95 and the Greyhound Company's from 16 to 12. As a result the Tramway Company

discharged 100 men and withdrew from service vehicles to the value of £30,000.

In December A.R. Millbourn of St John's School, Leatherhead, was appointed headmaster of Colston's Boys' School.

At their December meeting the Council appointed a new committee to be known as the Town Planning Committee. This was necessitated by the Housing and Town Planning Act 1919 that imposed new powers and duties on local authorities including the requirement to submit to the Ministry of Health a scheme in respect of all undeveloped land in the authority's area.

The option for the city to buy the tramway system arose again in 1922. The Tramways Option Committee recommended that the Corporation should waive its right to purchase for twenty-one years in exchange for the payment by the company of 5% of its gross receipts together with some improvements in vehicles and service. The company was adamant that it would not accept this proposal. The committee then recommended that the Corporation should purchase the undertaking but the proposal was defeated in full Council by 62 votes to 21.

1923

In February the tank, given to the city in 1919, was moved from its site on Durdham Down to the headquarters of the 6th Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment in St Michael's Hill. It was not an easy task. A 120-hp caterpillar tractor with a six-cylinder engine was employed; initially the huge chain securing the tank snapped and a Corporation steamroller had to assist. Eventually, using a steel hawser, the tank was slowly moved to its new position.

The stage licence granted to the Empire Theatre in the previous February does not appear to have resulted in the production of serious drama. In February the Sunbeams Review was the attraction and in the following week the audience was treated to a performance by the Stockpot Review which included an attractively dressed London beauty chorus. The non-smoking requirement previously imposed was relaxed by the justices in April, apart from the period of the pantomime season.

At the February meeting of the Council a councillor criticised the action of the Electricity Committee in buying their coal from collieries at Hanham, north Somerset and the Forest of Dean; he considered that Bristol pits should be favoured.

At their meeting in the following month the City Council received representatives from the Bristol Trades and Labour Council. The deputation protested at the action of the Bristol Guardians in giving work which should have been done by organised labour to men on relief, in order to test whether or not they were genuinely desirous of work.

In March the Watch Committee was informed that Horfield Prison would no longer be used to accommodate female prisoners who would have to be sent to Cardiff. They took the view that this would entail unnecessary time, trouble and expense.

Also in March the Watch Committee noted that, following their action at the end of the previous year to limit the number of buses, there had been an agreement between the Chief Constable and the proprietors as to the number and frequency of buses operating in each route in the city.

Walter Hawkins died on 31 March. After working as a journalist on the *Somerset Gazette*, he came to Bristol in 1864 when the proprietors of the *Bristol Times* and *Bristol Mirror* amalgamated to form the *Bristol Times and Mirror*, the first Conservative daily paper in the West of England. He joined the new paper as a journalist and became managing director in 1902 and chairman in 1907. In 1899 he was chairman of the Committee of Management of the Press Association.

Peaches Road, Downend, was officially opened on 9 April by Sir Henry Maybury, the Director General of Roads at the Ministry of Transport. The road, which was 509 yards in length, had been constructed by the unemployed of the district, many of them formerly out-workers in the boot trade. The cost of the road was £3,960 and the work provided employment for an average of 30 men over a period of 7-8 months. The land required had been given free of charge by the owners in every case.

In April the Council decided to apply to the Ministry of Health to sanction a loan to enable them to purchase 150 houses erected in 1919 by the Ministry of Munitions at Shirehampton. The City Engineer reported that the roads were made up and that the proposed purchase price of £55,000 was considerably less than the cost of construction.

On 3 May a meeting organised by the Bristol and District House Famine Campaign Committee took place at the Colston Hall; there was a large attendance. The meeting expressed the view that the deplorable conditions resulting from the housing shortage constituted a menace to the moral and physical health of the community. This prompted the Housing Committee to recommend the construction of additional houses and the implementation of various measures to stimulate private house building. Later in the year the committee reported that they had received over 7,600 applications for housing and that 1,304 houses had been erected.

In May the Council considered a report from the Watch Committee concerning the Central Fire and Police Stations. The committee pointed out that a report on the inadequate facilities had been submitted in 1905 at which time the Council decided to defer action for three years but that

nothing further was done. The Council now agreed that the premises should be reconstructed and the committee was authorised to inaugurate a public competition for architects to submit proposals.

During Whit week, at the end of May, some 300 boys (including 10 from Bristol) visited France on a trip organised by the British League of Help. After visiting Paris and some of the battlefield sites, the Bristol group went to Béthune where they were hospitably received and were able to view the ruined town and the efforts at reconstruction.

In early June there was a lightning strike of some of the employees of Bristol Tramway Company. Although the strike only lasted a few days, a number of ex-drivers and conductors applied for jobs and were engaged.

On 8 June three representatives of the Football League held an enquiry into the affairs of the Bristol City Football Club. As a result they ascertained that illegal payments had been made from the club's funds; the club was fined £250 and Alec Raisbeck, the secretary/manager was fined £60. The League also banned six directors (Messrs Vevers, Post, Thomas, Weeks, Pruet and Bacon) from taking part in the management of any club connected with the Football League.

In June Baroness Edith von Lortsch appeared before Bristol magistrates charged with attempted suicide. Following a bankruptcy order, a warrant for her ejectment from 157 Whiteladies Road was issued and she was found by the constable who arrived to serve it. She told the court that she thought it was better to end her life than to live on relations' charity and that it was unjust to burden England with herself when the country was already troubled with paupers. She was bound over and given one pound from the court's poor box.

The Grosvenor air race took place on 23 June. The race was for aircraft under 150 bhp and was from Lympne with compulsory stops at Croydon, Birmingham and Bristol. Major E.L. Foot, said to be Bristol Aircraft Company's best pilot, died when his plane, a Bristol monoplane, crashed near Chertsey.

The Birthday Honours list at the end of June contained a knighthood for Alderman Dr Ernest Henry Cook. He had been Lord Mayor in the preceding year and was Chairman of the Education Committee. The award was for public and political services in Bristol.

Following a reduction in pay imposed by their employers, dockers went on strike for just over a week in July. Their action was contrary to the advice of their union.

On 3 July the YMCA at Regent Street, Kingswood was completely destroyed by fire. The building, a large wooden structure, was the centre for the youth of the district; it provided leisure facilities in the week and

Bible classes on Sundays. The neighbouring premises belonging to a jeweller were seriously damaged. As the incident took place in Kingswood but very near to the city boundary both the local volunteers and the City Brigade attended. There was criticism of the latter who were said to have 'stood by' whilst the locals tackled the blaze.

The Wesleyan Conference took place at the end of July and the delegates were addressed by Lloyd George on the subject of 'The Christian Church and World Peace'. On the following day he received the freedom of the city. Another visitor to the conference was the Archbishop of Canterbury who was entertained to lunch at the Royal Hotel by Sir William Howell Davies.

In July 70 miners were discharged from local pits because of lack of trade.

Bristol Guardians held an extraordinary meeting on 14 September when they increased the poor rate to 2s: 3d, the highest in the city's history. The unemployment relief paid in the previous six months was £11,000 more than anticipated and a further sum of £4,000 in ordinary relief was occasioned by the dockers' strike. The Guardians welcomed the proposal currently being discussed to examine the possibility of a bridge between Bristol and South Wales; they considered that it would give an impetus to employment in Bristol and be of advantage to the city's commerce generally.

In the following week Mrs Mary E. Smith, the Empire's first lady cabinet member, visited the city. Mrs Smith was the Canadian Minister of Education and was entertained to lunch at the Royal Colonial Institute by the Lord Mayor, Sheriff, Master of the Merchant Venturers, members of the Council and other local notables.

On 8 October a conference to discuss the problems of unemployment took place at the Council House. It was attended by members of the Council and the Board of Guardians, employers, representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club and two Members of Parliament. The meeting resolved to draw to the Government's attention the difficulties of charging relief works to local rates because of the burden already being borne by business rate payers in a period of trade depression. They took the view that the problem should be dealt with on a national basis.

The municipal elections took place at the beginning of November; there was no change in the balance of parties.

The Bristol Guardians met at the end of November and one of the items for discussion was the menu for the inmates' Christmas dinner. The management had proposed to serve roast pork but one member felt that English beef should be provided. Another member expressed the

view that best grade foreign meat was better than fourth grade English and that there were unemployed men whose families would not even be getting foreign meat. Beef won the day.

During the year the Old Age Pensions Committee had investigated nearly 1,500 claims for the pension; some had to be disallowed because the claimants' means were over the statutory limit. They resolved to urge the Ministry of Health to promote legislation allowing every-one over the age of 70 to receive the pension.

Concern had been expressed about the fact that during the pantomime season there was no provision for serious drama. The Rotary Club's decision to remedy this state of affairs coincided with the wish of the Council to find a use for the Lesser Colston Hall. This resulted in the birth of the Rapier Players and the Little Theatre. It was originally intended to last for the pantomime season only but it proved so popular that it continued as a repertory theatre. The first performance took place on 17 December when the players performed *Other Peoples' Worries* by R.C. Carton. The programme also contained a musical selection that included two overtures, a madrigal and a selection from *Yeomen of the Guard*.

The results of the Parliamentary elections held in December were:

Bristol Central

T.W.H. Inskip (Con)	14386	
S.E. Walters (Lab)	<u>11932</u>	
	<u>2454</u>	no change

Bristol East

W.J. Baker (Lab)	14828	
H.S. Morris (Lib)	<u>12788</u>	
	<u>2040</u>	Labour gain

Bristol North

W.H. Ayles (Lab)	10432	
C.H.C. Guest (Lib)	8770	
E.W. Petter (Con)	<u>8643</u>	
	<u>1662</u>	Labour gain

Bristol South

W.B. Rees (Lib)	15235	
D.J. Vaughan (Lab)	<u>13701</u>	
	<u>1534</u>	no change

Bristol West

G.A. Gibbs (Con)	Unopp.	No change
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1924

At the beginning of the year Sir George Wills agreed to defray the costs of converting the Victoria Rooms into a University Students' Club. The rooms were ready for use by the students at the end of October.

On 2 January Major Cripps, the Chairman of Gloucestershire Highways Committee, formally opened Forest Road, Kingswood. The road was constructed by men who had previously been unemployed.

The Bristol General Post Office celebrated the New Year by taking delivery of fifteen new motor cycle combinations. It was thought that they would speed the delivery of mail particularly in country districts.

At the end of the month there was a gruesome discovery at 30, Montrose Park, Brislington. A decomposed body covered with lime and tar was found five feet under the floor of a room. The corpse was that of George William Cooper and within a short time his son, also George William Cooper, and the deceased's widow, Louisa, were charged with his murder. At the end of May they stood trial at Wells Assizes by which time Mrs Cooper's charge had been reduced to that of being an accessory and she was bound over. Her son was found guilty of manslaughter and Mr Justice Shearman sentenced him to seven years' penal servitude. The charge had been reduced on account of the severe provocation that he had suffered, but nevertheless the judge commented upon the severity of the injuries that he had inflicted on his father; the evidence of the nature of the injuries was given by Sir Bernard Spilsbury, the noted pathologist.

On 28 January a meeting took place to discuss a pageant to be held in Bristol at the end of May and later at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley. Great enthusiasm was expressed and the promoters said that they hoped to raise a surplus sufficient to endow a Chair of Imperial History at the University. The pageant containing seven scenes of the city's history was due to take place at Ashton Court on 24 May but had to be postponed for a week because a heavy downpour turned the site into a quagmire. There were six performances at Wembley at the beginning of June and the Duke and Duchess of York were in the audience on one occasion. However the attendances were below expectations; it was said that an expenditure of £16,000 was incurred in bringing the pageant to London and the gate receipts on Whit-Monday amounted to only £500. At the end of June there was a more sombre meeting of the organising committee when it was announced that the event had incurred a deficit of nearly £10,000 and that guarantors would have to be asked to contribute. During Whit week the city also took over the Civic Hall at the Exhibition. There were displays by the Museum and

Art Gallery, the University, local schools and many local manufacturers; the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress were present daily during the week. Visitors to the Exhibition were also able to see a bronze sculpture entitled 'John Cabot and his son Sebastian - the pioneers of British maritime enterprise' by John Cassidy RBS RCA, the sculptor responsible for the figure of Edmund Burke in Colston Avenue.

On 5 February the Theatre Royal was in darkness because the artists had not received their salaries and were stranded in Bristol. The performance had been put on by Hamilton Baines Ltd on behalf of Bristol Theatre Royal Ltd (of which Mr Baines was a director). At the end of November, at Nottingham Magistrates' Court, Baines was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for obtaining goods by false pretences.

The City Council were becoming concerned about the scale of evictions; at their February meeting Councillor Hennessey commented that during the previous two years there had been sixty-eight evictions and that there were two hundred houses in the city lying empty. The councillors agreed to send a deputation to London to urge amendments to the Rent Act requiring landlords to offer alternative accommodation and giving the courts powers to postpone possession orders. In the following month the Housing Committee reported that they had completed the construction of 1,394 houses (in addition to the 150 acquired from the Ministry of Munitions). They had also placed contracts for the construction of 360 by private builders and were going ahead with another 250 at Speedwell by direct labour.

A new Miner's Institute at Bedminster Down was opened on 8 March. The building, which cost £950, contained a full sized billiard table and seating for 400 persons. The building had been financed as a result of the recent wages settlement that had required employers to set aside 1d for every ton of coal for welfare schemes.

At the end of March there was a serious fire at the premises of W.G. Vowles Ltd the well-known organ builders of St James's Square. The factory was almost completely burnt out.

The newly constructed Midland Bank at 49/51, Corn Street opened for business on 7 April having transferred the business from the other side of the street. The builder was Frank Wilkins of Temple Back and the architects were Whinny & Son of London.

In the course of their meeting on 14 April the members of Mangotsfield Council expressed great indignation at the fact that members of the Rodway Hill Golf Club were playing on Sundays.

Bristol Wireless Company asked the Sanitary Committee for permission to relay the King's speech marking the opening of the British Empire

Exhibition. The committee decided at their April meeting to allow the broadcast in Queen Square and/or the Horsefair but not on College Green.

On 28 April the Lord Mayor unveiled a memorial to the 199 servicemen killed in action who were buried in Greenbank Cemetery. The memorial was in the form of a large cross of Portland stone and was provided by the Imperial War Graves Commission.

On the same day the National Citizens' Union opened its anti-socialist campaign with a meeting at Merrywood School. It was presided over by H.A. White and addressed by B.C. Cass, Vice-President of the Bristol branch.

On the following day the Revd Dr T. Ferrier Hulme, the President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, opened the new Central Hall in Old Market Street. Also present was Mrs J. Arthur Rank whose family had made a substantial contribution towards the cost of the building.

At its May meeting the Bristol Employment Committee was told that the numbers of the city's unemployed were:

Men	11,815
Women	4,359
Boys	495
Girls	<u>652</u>
	<u>17,321</u>

This represented an increase of 1,100 over the previous month due to the fact that workpeople had been laid off by one of the large local firms. The total showed a decrease of 650 when compared with the same month in the previous year. By the beginning of July the number had reduced to 14,530.

The competition to design the new Police and Fire Station was won by Jones and Thomas of Cardiff and their plans were put on public display in May. An application for loan sanction was submitted to the Minister of Health who expressed some reservations on account of the necessity to conserve labour for the construction of working-class dwellings. However, after some lobbying by local Members of Parliament, he gave consent.

On 2 June Duck, Son and Pinker applied to the Licensing Justices for permission to hold band concerts on Sundays at the Glen. The bench was told that there was a demand for good concerts and that some 80,000 people visited the Glen each year; it was not intended to charge for admission but the performers would rely on a silver collection. Six magistrates were sitting and, by a majority, they refused the application. In September a meeting took place at the Glen to protest at the decision.

On 4 June the Second Session of the National Sunday Conference met at the Colston Hall to discuss 'Present Day Attacks on Sunday'. The

meeting was presided over by E.N. Tribe and organised by the Imperial Alliance for the Defence of Sunday and the Bristol Lord's Day Union.

Later in the month a deputation from the Housing Committee visited Judge Parsons KC who presided over the County Court to discuss evictions. They asked him to temper justice with other considerations and the Judge told them that he had never had so distasteful a task but that he had to award possession when rent was in arrears and had no discretion to grant postponements.

At the end of July a tragic incident took place at Brantham Sands, South Devon. A party of boys from Cotham Secondary School were on a walking holiday and one of them got into difficulties whilst bathing. A master, George Ticknell, went to assist him and, when he was out of his depth, three boys went to his aid. The master and four boys (Cyril Owen, Francis Elmes, Charles Pitt and Tom Anderson) were drowned.

Professor Julius Wertheimer died on 9 August. He was born in 1859 and came to Bristol in 1890 as Principal of the Merchant Venturers' Technical College, remaining there until it became part of the University. At the time of his death he was Dean of the Faculty of Engineering.

Later in the month local miners were protesting that East Bristol Collieries Ltd were not implementing the recently negotiated wages agreement. They gave a week's notice of strike action. The strike duly took place and unsuccessful efforts to negotiate a settlement took place. In October the employers announced their intention not to reopen any of the collieries with the sole exception of Coalpit Heath.²

On 6 September *SS Etrick* went aground in the River Avon at the far end of Sea Mills reach just before entering the Horseshoe Bend. Three tugs tried to move the vessel but without success. Further unsuccessful efforts were made in the following weeks but the ship remained there until 25 October causing difficulties to other ships using the river. Some of the cargo was thrown overboard in an attempt to lighten the load and a number of men appeared in the Magistrates' Court charged with stealing the goods. They claimed that the thought that the items had been abandoned and the court bound them over to be of good behaviour.

James T. Francombe died on 11 September aged 81. He was a schoolteacher, becoming Headmaster of Redcliffe School. He was the Unionist Parliamentary candidate for the Bristol South constituency in 1910, losing by 138 votes. Mr Francombe was elected to the City Council in 1911, became an Alderman and JP and Lord Mayor in 1919/20.

² This seems to have a bluff; see *The Bristol Coal Industry* by Keith Ramsey (No 106 in this series) at page 23.

At their September meeting the Bristol Guardians were able to reduce to Poor Rate to 1s: 10d. The rate for the previous corresponding half-year was 2s: 3d.

On 3 October a concrete wall built along the bank of the River Avon just below Point Villa collapsed causing a landslide. This caused a setback to the work being carried out to construct a new low level road (the Portway) to Avonmouth. Two months later the Sanitary Committee, who were responsible for the work, appointed the Engineer to the Manchester Ship Canal to advise them on the means of overcoming their difficulties. A week after the collapse there was serious flooding caused by a heavy rainfall particularly in Saint Werburghs, Stapleton, Eastville, Westbury and Long Ashton. Houses were flooded and some roads turned into rivers.

A General Election was called for the end of October. Winston Churchill came to address a meeting at the Colston Hall which was all but filled an hour before it was due to start. The audience passed the time singing patriotic songs and listening to an organ recital by Ralph Morgan. Mr Churchill was supported on the platform by all the Conservative and Liberal candidates in the Bristol constituencies because, as Sir George Davies put it, 'of his great fight against the aims of the Socialist Party'. The Prime Minister, Ramsey MacDonald, spoke for one hour and twenty minutes at a meeting at the Bristol Empire. The results were:

Bristol Central

T.W.H. Inskip (Con)	17,177	
J.A. Lovat-Fraser (Lab)	<u>14,018</u>	
	<u>3,159</u>	No change

Bristol East

W.J. Baker (Lab)	16,920	
H.J. Maggs (Lib)	<u>12,143</u>	
	<u>4,777</u>	No change

Bristol North

F.E. Guest (Lib)	17,799	
W.H. Ayles (Lab)	<u>12,319</u>	
	<u>5,480</u>	Lib gain

Bristol South

W.B. Rees (Lib)	16,722	
D.J. Vaughan (Lab)	<u>15,702</u>	
	<u>1,020</u>	No change

Bristol West

G.A. Gibbs (Con)	23,574	
M. Giles (Lab)	<u>6,276</u>	
	<u>17,298</u>	No change

James O'Grady, the Governor of Tasmania, received a knighthood in November. He was born in Bristol and worked in the city as a cabinetmaker. He was an active trade unionist and once represented Easton as a councillor. He was President of the Trades Union Congress when it met in Bristol in 1898.

Municipal elections were held at the beginning of November. Liberals and Conservatives joined forces to stand as Citizen candidates but the strength of the parties was unchanged. The weather on polling day was atrocious and there was a low turnout.

At the beginning of December several members of the 4th Gloucesters Territorials were fined for not attending the regiment's annual camp.

The Recorder of Bristol, Dr Blake Odgers KC, died suddenly on 16 December whilst walking in Regent's Park. In the following month Henry Holman Gregory KC was appointed in his place.

Also on 16 December Prince George (who later became the Duke of Kent) visited the city to open the great Nautical Fair held on behalf of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society. There was a reception for him at the Council House, where he met Bristol's last surviving Crimean veteran, and a luncheon at the Victoria Rooms.

On 22 December the ex-Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald sailed from Avonmouth in Elders and Fyffe's SS *Camito* for a holiday in the West Indies. A large crowd of well-wishers saw him off.

1925

In February Henry William Sharland, the noted artist whose engravings of local scenes are well known, pleaded guilty in the Magistrates' Court to the charge of damaging books in the Central Library. He had torn out illustrations of St Paul's and Gloucester Cathedrals but could offer no explanation of why he had done so. He was fined £5 and ordered to pay £11 damages.

On 26 February the St Nicholas Street premises of T. Page Wood, a gunsmith, were broken into. The thieves stole 1,500 rounds of ammunition and eight revolvers. The police were said to be looking for two Irishmen who had been seen in the vicinity of the shop.

At the beginning of March the Licensing Justices eventually granted a three months' Sunday music licence for the Glen.

On 10 March there was a mass meeting of the Bristol and District Unemployed Association followed by a march to the Council House.

In the same month there was a ceremony in Béthune when the Lord Mayor, who was accompanied by a large delegation, handed over to the local authorities the deeds of a block of dwellings recently erected in the town. They provided accommodation for 16 families and the cost had

been met by the fund raised in Bristol. The architect was W.H. Watkins of Bristol. The final meeting of the fund-raising committee took place at the end of July; the dwellings had cost just under £6,000.

The Imperial Scout Conference took place at the Grand Hotel on 18 April. Local guides took delegates to visit sites of historic interest in the city and on the following day there was a huge rally of Scouts, Rovers and Wolf Cubs in the Hippodrome.

In May the Light Scouting Division of the Italian Navy, comprising three destroyers, visited the city and were moored in the Royal Edward Dock. A number of people visited the dock and were impressed by the smart appearance of the vessels. The visitors went on visits to local factories and were treated to a concert in the Hippodrome where the London Sonora Band and Sybil Vane, the Welsh prima donna, entertained them.

Princess Helena Victoria formally opened Bristol Homeopathic Hospital on 26 May. The entire cost of £130,000 had been borne by W. Melville Wills in memory of his son Captain Bruce Melville Wills who was killed in action in February 1915 whilst helping to carry a fellow officer to safety. The building was designed by Oatley & Lawrence. Earlier in the year, in February, Mr Melville Wills had suffered another bereavement when his son Edgar was killed by an avalanche whilst skiing in Switzerland.

In the June Birthday Honours List there were knighthoods for George Herbert Oatley, the architect who designed the Wills Memorial Building for Bristol University, John Lloyd Seymour Williams, a local solicitor who was Clerk to Warmley Rural District Council and who had been Chairman of the Executive of the Rural District Councils Association for 25 years, and William George Verdon Smith, the Chairman of Bristol Employment Committee and Managing Director of the Bristol Tramway and Carriage Company. Mary Monica Wills, the widow of H.H. Wills, was appointed a Dame Commander.

On 6 June King George V and Queen Mary visited the city. The king had expressed the wish that, owing to the special difficulties of the times, needless expense would be avoided. The royal party arrived at Temple Meads and drove to the Council House to receive an address of welcome. They took luncheon at the Victoria Rooms where Granny Jarrett of St Judes, aged 104, was, with others, presented to them. The next stop was the Great Hall of the newly completed Bristol University building which the King formally opened; during the course of the ceremony there was a 'royal salute' of 21 strokes of Great George.

In July a public appeal was launched to provide wireless receivers in local hospitals. Following the appeal's success there were installations in

the Infirmary and other hospitals. The facilities at the General Hospital were opened on 9 December by the Lord Mayor. A receiver operated by a master control switch in the matron's room was linked to 300 sets of headphones and loudspeakers in the nurses' lounge and the doctors' room.

On Sunday 26 July a party of 22 men from the Redfield and St George districts boarded a 'County Maid' charabanc at Blackhorse Road for a mystery tour. The driver lost control whilst descending Harptree Hill, West Harptree; eight men died and many others were injured.

At their July meeting the Council resolved to apply for loan sanction to purchase the Blaise Estate for £18,000. The Health Committee were considering a proposal that the house should be used to accommodate tuberculosis sufferers.

On 14 August Dr Walter C. Swayne, a Clifton obstetric physician, was visiting his daughter and son-in-law, Richard Lewis Wreford Brown, at Sellack near Ross-on-Wye. Wreford Brown was suffering the after effects of gas poisoning which he sustained whilst serving as an officer in the Welsh Guards at Cambrai, and during the course of his father-in-law's visit he went into his bedroom and shot him. He was charged with murder and appeared at Hereford Assizes in November. He was found to be guilty but insane and ordered to be detained during His Majesty's pleasure.

On 17 August Stephen Miller, a foreman stevedore, rescued an elderly man who had fallen into the dock at Bathurst Basin. He claimed that this was the 55th time he had made such a rescue and that on one occasion he had saved as many as five children in one week.

At their September meeting the Council referred back a recommendation from the Cemeteries Committee that a crematorium should be built at Canford.

In September the local branch of the British Legion formed a committee to take forward plans for a war memorial. The first plan produced took the form of a gothic cloister type of structure incorporating a bus shelter.

On 23 September there was a mid-air collision at Filton. It resulted in the deaths of two Air Force officers who had been engaged in landing practice in two-seater Bristol Fighters.

At the end of the month James Maurice Hector, aged 13, absconded from Portishead Nautical School, where he had been detained following an assault. He walked into Bristol Central Police Station and, giving a false name, told the officer that he had come to Bristol with his father who was a merchant seaman. After seeing off his parent who had set sail for Japan he was stranded in the city and he asked if he could be

provided with the fare to enable him to return to his home at Portsmouth. Suspicions were aroused, however, and enquiries made; as a result he was returned to Portishead.

Municipal elections took place at the beginning of November. Labour contested 21 of the 23 seats and gained three seats and lost one.

The 19th National Peace Conference took place on 13 November at the Friends' Meeting House. Miss Ruth Fry presided and delegates heard an address on 'Arbitration and the States outside the League of Nations'.

On 27 November there was a civic service at the Cathedral to pay homage to Queen Alexandra who died on 20 November.

In reply to a Parliamentary question in December the Minister of Labour said that in the period from January to November 391 men in Bristol had been refused extended benefit on the ground that they were not making reasonable efforts to secure whole-time employment.

1926

At the beginning of the year Josiah Green was appointed Town Clerk in place of E.J. Taylor who resigned on health grounds.

On 9 January fire totally destroyed the church of St Michael and All Angels, Windmill Hill, Bedminster. The chancel had been built in 1887 and the nave in 1906³. Hitherto the City Fire Brigade had not been allowed to attend fires outside the city boundary, but an agreement was reached with Kingswood Urban District Council to allow them to fight fires in that district. The first occasion on which they did so was on 18 February when they went to a house fire at Alsopp Terrace. It appeared that the voluntary brigade that had previously served Kingswood had been disbanded.

The new Dean of Bristol, Revd Canon H.L.C.V. de Candole, was installed on 20 February.

At the end of the month Harry Lorraine, the film star and stuntman, rode an E.W. Douglas motor cycle from London to Bristol whilst handcuffed and in chains. He left Marble Arch at 8.40 am and arrived at St Augustine's Parade at 2.35 pm.

Harry Foster Toogood had been a resident of East Bristol before going to Russia in 1923 and in February he was expelled from that country by the State Political Department. He was arrested and, after being detained for several hours, was ordered to leave the country in three days. He failed to do so and was re-arrested and escorted to the

³ See Latimer's *Annals of the 19th Century* page 517.

frontier. He had been educated at Birmingham University and whilst in Bristol he was a well-known left-wing socialist. Toogood was a friend of Upton Sinclair and one of the first members of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

The new swing bridge at Cumberland Basin came into operation at the end of March. It replaced an old structure with a smaller capacity.

Benson Greenall, a Ministry of Health Inspector, conducted an enquiry into 'the No 1 and Filton' section of the Bristol Town Planning Scheme. It lasted two and a half days and concluded on 25 March. He considered proposals relating to the development of Avonmouth, Shirehampton, Westbury-on-Trym, Horfield and Filton.

On 26 March there took place the public bankruptcy examination of Major H.W. Killigrew Wait, a corn merchant. His business under the name of Wait & James had been in existence for over a century. Liabilities were estimated at £205,752 and assets at £40,190.

At their March meeting the Council approved the Library Committee's proposal to purchase Fishponds Picture Hall for £2,500 and convert it into a library.

At their March meeting the Council considered a proposal from Councillor Hennessey that the Baths Committee should make provision to let halls under their control on Sundays for non-religious purposes; it was defeated by 35 votes to 9.

At the end of March A.J. Cook, the Miners' Association secretary, addressed a meeting at the Colston Hall organised by the Trades and Labour Council. He gave an account of the difficulties being encountered during the course of the national negotiations with the employers.

In April the Council accepted a gift of £6,000 from Mr and Mrs Edward Robinson to defray the cost of providing a public open space in Bedminster.

The General Strike started at the beginning of May. Despite the fact that there were unusually large stocks of coal in the city, some factories were affected. Lysaght's iron works, Chappell & Allen's corset factory and Pountney's pottery at Fishponds closed, the latter resulting on 600 to 700 employees being out of work. W.D. & H.O. Wills and some east Bristol boot factories went on half-time working. The workmen at the Corporation's electricity undertaking joined the strike but engineers and volunteers maintained the supply. Delivery drivers at George's Brewery ceased work but production was maintained and licensees collected their own supplies. Bristol Tramway Company's buses, tramcars and taxis continued to run; the drivers were not union members. Christ Church Clifton Parish Hall in Portland Street was opened as a centre for the unemployed; books, newspapers, magazines, refreshment and musical

entertainment were provided. Lord Stanhope, the local Civilian Commissioner, appealed for volunteers and by the end of the strike nearly 7,000 had come forward; the centre for volunteers to register was at the Central Library which closed for normal business; on one day at the beginning of the strike some 2,000 telephone calls were received there. Some of the volunteers drove lorries and one contingent unloaded a banana boat at Avonmouth Dock. Some 300 men volunteered to serve as special constables and Special Constable Parker had the distinction of making the first arrest; the culprit was Eleanor Donovan (aged 78) who he found sitting in Lower Maudlin Street, drunk and incapable. After about ten days strikers were beginning to drift back to work and the strike ended after about two weeks although the miners remained on strike until December.

In June the Warmley Guardians wrote to the Ministry of Health pointing out that regulations prevented them from granting out relief to single miners who were on strike. The only way in which they could assist was to issue an order sending the claimant to the Institution.

In the same month the Bristol Relief Committee made the fourth week's distribution in the form of vouchers to be exchanged for supplies at local shops. The cost of the week's distribution was £1,200.

The first sitting of the new Magistrates' Court at Staple Hill took place on 1 July; it replaced the old court at Lawford's Gate. The first day's list included cases of working a horse whilst it was unfit, allowing a dog to be on the loose without a name on its collar and permitting four cows to stray upon the highway. Four Kingswood boys were charged with playing cards on Orchard Road; they were caught by a constable who went on to the adjoining allotment and surprised them by jumping over the hedge near the site of the illegal gambling.

On 2 July the Rt. Hon. Col. Wilfred Ashley MP, the Minister of Transport, opened the Portway. The Prince of Wales had been asked but said that he would not be available until October. It was the most expensive road building project in the United Kingdom and the work had taken five years. There had been an average daily employment of 800 men and the construction had entailed blasting away 25,000 tons of rock.

On 5 July the Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress joined other passengers to inaugurate the new Beachley to Aust ferry. The previous ferry had continued until the disappearance of the stage coach and for a considerable time there had been no service, necessitating those wishing to cross the Severn to travel by way of Gloucester. The new vessel carried 65 passengers together with bicycles, motor bikes and sidecars.

In July Miss Edghill, the Headmistress of Redland High School, left to take up a similar post at St Felix School, Southwold. Her replacement

was Clara Millicent Taylor (formerly Headmistress of Northampton High School for Girls) who arrived in the following September.

At the September Council meeting, in answer to a question by Councillor Hennesey, Sir John Swayne, the chairman of the Watch Committee, confirmed that at midnight on 3 June the police had raided the offices of the local Communist Party. No charges arose but the police retained some books of a subversive nature. The councillor claimed that the books seized included *The Nationalisation of the Railways*, Shelley's *The Masque of Anarchy* and Reade's *Ten Days that Shook the World*; Sir John commented that the last named was the only one retained by the police.

The Clifton Rugby Club's new ground at Eastfield Road was opened on 11 September. During the celebrations the captain of Bristol Rugby Club, L.J. Corbett, whilst replying to the toast to his club, advised Clifton to take the game more seriously.

In October the anniversary of the execution of Nurse Edith Cavell was marked by a ceremony at the St Mary Redcliffe war memorial when flowers provided by the nurses at the General Hospital were laid.

Alderman William Whitefield died on 21 October. He was born in Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1850; he came to Bristol in 1891 and was appointed miners' agent. In 1906 he joined the small number of Labour representatives on Bristol Council.

At their October meeting the Education Committee was told that two girls from St George School, Dorothy Millard and Barbara Cole, had been selected to spend an academic year at the Collège des Jeunes Femmes at Béthune. He reminded the committee that in the autumn of 1923 Elsie Winchester, also a pupil at St George School and the daughter of Councillor Winchester, had started her studies at Béthune and that after her return she did well in her examinations at Bristol University. The committee discussed the possibility of a reciprocal visit by French students but there was a difficulty in that the council had no boarding school.

At the municipal elections at the beginning of November Labour gained three seats. There was a low turnout comprising only 45.31% of the voters.

On 25 November a dense fog descended on the city. A bunch of enthusiasts on the Downs used hand lamps to guide unaccompanied drivers and the buses and trams were suspended early. One bus drove into a ditch near Cambridge Batch and a young lady fell into a disused quarry at St George. No shipping movements were possible and two vessels were held up at Walton Bay waiting to dock.

At the end of the month Col. H. Cary Batten died. He had been a manager of Stuckey's Bank and served as Sheriff on two occasions.

The miners' strike resulted in an increase in coal imports at Bristol docks. In November 14 vessels from the USA and four from Europe discharged coal.

A newspaper had held a public ballot on a proposal to site the city's war memorial on College Green. 3,268 votes were in favour of the scheme and 3,213 against.

On 4 December a party of distinguished visitors including the Rt. Hon. S.M. Bruce, Prime Minister of Australia, visited Avonmouth Docks. The Lord Mayor later entertained them to dinner at the Mansion House.

On 9 December local miners held mass meetings at St Michael's Parish Hall, Two Mile Hill and at Mangotsfield (for the Parkfield men) to consider the employers' latest offer. They voted to accept it.

Lord Mayors and Sheriffs

(The civic year ran from November)

1919/20	James Thomas Francombe	William Alfred Titley
1920/21	George Bryant Britton	Owen Stanley Davies
1921/22	Ernest Henry Cook	Francis Nicholas Cowlin
	(knighted 1923)	
1922/23	Alfred Dowling	Horace Walker
1923/24	Alfred Arthur Sennington	Frederick Burris
1924/25	Ernest Brookhouse Richards	Frank Oliver Wills
1925/26	Frank Moore	Lionel Goodenough Taylor
1926/27	Edward Malachi Dyer	Frank Ernest Sampson

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